



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 1975

CONTENTS

PAGE NO.

| | |
|---|---|
| TRAFFIC PROBLEM FAR FROM OVER -- SAYS COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT | 1 |
| STUDENTS TO TAKE PART IN +ACID RAIN AND OTHER AIR POLLUTION PROJECTS+ SURVEY | 3 |
| PRESIDENT OF INSTITUTION OF FIRE ENGINEERS TO VISIT HONG KONG | 5 |
| PRESENTATION TO RETIRING SWD PROBATION OFFICER | 5 |
| TWO BUILDINGS IN QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL DECLARED DANGEROUS .. | 6 |

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 1975

- 1 -

FEWER CARS ON THE ROADS - BUT TRAFFIC PROBLEM
FAR FROM OVER, SAYS TRANSPORT COMMISSIONER

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THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT, MR. IAN MACPHERSON, TODAY SOUNDED A NOTE OF CAUTION ON TRAFFIC PROBLEMS AND SAID THEY WERE FAR FROM BEING OVER DESPITE A SWITCH AWAY FROM PRIVATE CAR OWNERSHIP AND USE INTO PUBLIC TRANSPORT DURING THE PAST 15 MONTHS.

HE SAID PRELIMINARY PROJECTIONS INDICATED THAT, ON CERTAIN PERFECTLY REASONABLE ASSUMPTIONS AS TO ECONOMIC AND POPULATION GROWTH AND WITHOUT FURTHER RESTRAINTS, PRIVATE CARS WOULD BE DOUBLE THE PRESENT NUMBER OF 118,000 BY THE 1980'S.

SPEAKING AT A LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE Y'S MEN'S CLUB, MR. MACPHERSON SAID ONE OF THE MAIN PREMISES OF THE TRANSPORT GREEN PAPER WAS THAT ROAD CONGESTION WAS THE MAIN PROBLEM AND THAT PRIVATE CARS WERE THE MAIN CONTRIBUTOR TO SUCH CONGESTION.

HE SAID THAT DESPITE A MARKED DROP OF SOME 10,000 IN VEHICLES, MAINLY IN PRIVATE CARS, IN THE PAST 15 MONTHS, IT WOULD BE NAIVE TO SUPPOSE THAT TRAFFIC PROBLEMS WERE OVER IF ONE ASSUMED THAT THE COMBINATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING THE PRIVATE CAR MARKET WOULD NOT CONTINUE, AND GIVEN A RESTORED ANNUAL GROWTH RATE IN HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCTS PLUS A PREDICTED POPULATION INCREASE.

+IF ONE ACCEPTS THE ASSUMPTIONS, ONE IS FORCED TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE BASIC PREMISE OF THE GREEN PAPER REMAINS SOUND - THE FACTS OF LIFE ON THE ROAD ARE SUCH THAT FURTHER RESTRAINTS ON PRIVATE CAR OWNERSHIP AND USE SEEM TO BE INEVITABLE,+ HE SAID.

THE COMMISSIONER POINTED OUT THAT WHILE IMPROVEMENTS COULD BE MADE TO THE ROAD NETWORKS, AND ROAD ENGINEERING AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COULD BE EMPLOYED TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOW, THERE WERE PRACTICAL LIMITS TO SUCH MEASURES.

WHAT THE RESTRAINTS SHOULD BE IF THERE MUST BE RESTRAINTS REMAINED TO BE SEEN, HE SAID, BUT HE DID NOT SEE TOO MANY PRACTICABLE OPTIONS OTHER THAN FISCAL ONES SO AS TO DETER ASPIRATIONS TOWARDS CAR OWNERSHIP, WHICH, THOUGH ENTIRELY LEGITIMATE, MUST BE KEPT WITHIN BOUNDS IN HONG KONG'S PHYSICAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

+I AM FAR FROM BEING IN FAVOUR OF TOO MUCH INTERVENTION IN THE COMMERCIAL OPERATION OF EITHER THE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE TRANSPORT FIELD, BUT IF ONE ACCEPTS THE PREDICTIONS, SURELY THERE SEEMS NOT TO BE TOO MUCH ALTERNATIVE IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE AN ACCEPTABLE ROAD USE MIX,+ HE SAID.

/MR. MACPHERSON

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 1975

- 2 -

MR. MACPHERSON CITED SOME OBJECTIVE FINDINGS OF A RECENT HOUSEHOLD SURVEY ON THE TRANSPORT GREEN PAPER WHICH SHOWED THAT 50 PER CENT OF CAR OWNING HOUSEHOLDS EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROVIDED IT WAS READILY AVAILABLE= AND 33 PER CENT OF MOTORISTS EVEN WENT AS FAR AS TO SAY THEY CONSIDERED FURTHER RESTRAINTS ON PRIVATE CAR OWNERSHIP TO BE NECESSARY AND UNAVOIDABLE.

THE SURVEY ALSO SHOWS THAT NON-CAR OWNING FAMILIES - NEARLY 90 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION - WHO HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO TRAVEL BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT, TEND TO FAVOUR RESTRICTIONS OF PRIVATE CAR OWNERSHIP IF THIS REDUCES CONGESTION AND ALLOWS PUBLIC TRANSPORT TO FLOW MORE FREELY, HE ADDED.

ON THE GROWTH PATTERN OF REGISTERED VEHICLES, THE COMMISSIONER SAID THAT OVER THE FIVE YEARS FROM 1969 TO 1973, IT WAS UP TO AND EVEN IN EXCESS OF THE PREDICTED 14 PER CENT ANNUM MENTIONED IN THE GREEN PAPER, AND THERE WAS NO REASON TO SUPPOSE THAT THIS GROWTH RATE WOULD NOT BE MAINTAINED.

HE SAID A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE PRESENT FIGURE OF 192,000 AND THOSE OF 1969 SHOWED AN OVERALL INCREASE IN VEHICLE NUMBERS OF 54 PER CENT, WITH PRIVATE CARS ALONE TODAY TOTALLING THE OVERALL NUMBER OF VEHICLES IN 1969.

DURING THE SAME PERIOD, HOWEVER, THE NUMBER OF ROAD MILES HAS ONLY INCREASED BY 9.9 PER CENT SO THAT VEHICLES PER ROAD MILE HAVE GONE UP FROM 211 TO 297, AN INCREASE OF 85 PER CENT COMPARED WITH 1969, HE ADDED.

ON THE TRANSPORT GREEN PAPER, MR. MACPHERSON SAID THE RE-WRITE OF THIS AS A WHITE PAPER SETTING OUT GOVERNMENT POLICY ON TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC MATTERS WAS SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION TOWARDS THE END OF THIS YEAR, PENDING AN IMPORTANT GUIDE TO POLICY EMERGING FROM THE COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORT STUDY WHICH WAS BEING CARRIED OUT BY CONSULTANTS.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: COPIES OF MR. MACPHERSON'S SPEECH, IN CHINESE AND ENGLISH, ARE AVAILABLE FOR COLLECTION FROM THE GIS PRESS ROOM, BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, 6TH FLOOR.

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THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 1975

- 3 -

STUDENTS TO STUDY EFFECTS OF AIR POLLUTION
ON RAIN
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IS POLLUTION IN HONG KONG MAKING RAIN ACID?

THIS IS WHAT THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS FROM NEARLY 240 SCHOOLS WILL BE TRYING TO FIND OUT IN A COLONY-WIDE SURVEY JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, AND THE CONSERVANCY ASSOCIATION IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY AND THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

THE SURVEY, CALLED 'ACID RAIN AND OTHER AIR POLLUTION PROJECTS,' IS THE SECOND PART OF A WIDER STUDY ON 'PURE AIR' AND WILL FOCUS ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH AIR POLLUTION IN ONE DISTRICT AFFECTS THE SURROUNDING AREAS AND HONG KONG AS A WHOLE.

THIS WILL BE THE FIRST TIME SUCH A STUDY WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN HONG KONG. IN THE UNITED STATES, A SIMILAR SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED ABOUT A YEAR AGO BY 16,000 STUDENTS AND THE RESULTS ENABLED SCIENTISTS TO MAP OUT POLLUTION OVER THE WHOLE COUNTRY — SOMETHING THAT HAD NEVER BEEN DONE BEFORE.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WAS CONFIDENT THAT HONG KONG STUDENTS COULD PRODUCE EQUALLY INTERESTING AND HELPFUL INFORMATION WHICH COULD BE OF IMPORTANCE TO VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND PRIVATE ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN FIGHTING AIR POLLUTION.

TO LAUNCH THE SURVEY, A SEMINAR WILL BE HELD THIS SATURDAY (APRIL 12) AT THE KOWLOON TRUE LIGHT GIRLS' COLLEGE WHERE SCHOOL TEAMS WILL BE BRIEFED BY EXPERTS AND OBTAIN INFORMATION ON HOW TO CONDUCT THE SURVEY AND PREPARE THEIR REPORTS.

THE SEMINAR WILL BE OPENED BY MR. ARTHUR BROWN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT. SPEAKERS WILL INCLUDE MR. MICHAEL WEBSTER, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONSERVANCY ASSOCIATION AND DR. BETH GOTT, VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION, WHO WILL GIVE AN ILLUSTRATED TALK ON THE ORGANISATION AND CONDUCT OF THE SURVEY.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT IS BEING GIVEN BY RANK XEROX LTD. WHICH HAS IMPORTED SPECIAL ACID MEASURING PAPER FROM THE UNITED STATES FOR PARTICIPATING STUDENTS TO CONDUCT THEIR TESTS AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE.

DURING THE SURVEY, SCHOOL TEAMS WILL BE REQUIRED TO COLLECT AND MEASURE RAIN FALL FOR SEVEN CONSECUTIVE DAYS AND TEST THE ACIDITY OF THE RAIN. THEY WILL RECORD THE DATA COLLECTED AND SUBMIT THEM TO THE CONSERVANCY ASSOCIATION WHICH WILL ANALYSE THE DATA AND COMPILE A REPORT WHICH IS TO BE PUBLISHED LATER ON.

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 1975

- 4 -

THE SPOKESMAN SAID IT WAS HOPED THAT SCHOOLS WOULD CONTINUE TAKING TESTS AFTER SUBMITTING THEIR PRELIMINARY FINDINGS.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE SURVEY WAS OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE AS THE ACIDITY OF RAIN COULD AFFECT SOIL AND CROPS AND NATURAL VEGETATION. IN SOME EUROPEAN CITIES, HE SAID, ACID RAIN HAD BECOME A SERIOUS PROBLEM WITH ACID RAIN EATING AWAY STONE AND STATUES.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID IT WAS PROBABLE THAT INFORMATION COLLECTED IN HONG KONG MAY BE SENT TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS OVERSEAS INTERESTED IN THE PROBLEMS OF ACID RAIN.

HE RECALLED THAT THE REPORT OF A PREVIOUS SURVEY ON WATER POLLUTION CONDUCTED IN 1973 BY SOME 18,000 STUDENTS HAD BEEN WELL RECEIVED BOTH LOCALLY AND OVERSEAS AND MANY COUNTRIES HAD ASKED FOR DETAILS.

THE FIRST PART OF THE 'PURE AIR' SURVEY -- PROJECT WINDSHIFT, WHICH AIMS TO PRODUCE UNIQUE LOCAL WIND PATTERN DATA -- WAS LAUNCHED IN EARLY MARCH THIS YEAR. THE RESULTS OF THIS SURVEY WILL BE COLLATED, COMPILED AND ANALYSED BY COMPUTER TO PRESENT THE LOCAL VARIATIONS IN WIND PATTERN AT THE END OF THE CURRENT ACADEMIC YEAR. IT INVOLVES 46 SCHOOLS AND THE TWO UNIVERSITIES.

NOTE TO EDITORS: MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE WELCOME TO COVER THE SEMINAR. IT WILL BEGIN AT 10.30 A.M. ON APRIL 12 (SATURDAY) AT THE KOWLOON TRUE LIGHT GIRLS' COLLEGE, 54A, WATERLOO ROAD, KOWLOON. RADIO AND TELEVISION CREWS WISHING TO INTERVIEW THE SPEAKERS MAY DO SO HALF AN HOUR BEFORE THE START OF THE SEMINAR. THEY SHOULD BE AT THE VENUE NOT LATER THAN 10 A.M. ON SATURDAY.

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THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 1975

- 5 -

PRESIDENT OF INSTITUTION OF FIRE
ENGINEERS TO VISIT HONG KONG

MR. E.H. WHITAKER, PRESIDENT OF THE INSTITUTION OF FIRE ENGINEERS IN BRITAIN, IS TO SPEND A WEEK IN HONG KONG AS GUEST OF THE LOCAL BRANCH.

MR. WHITAKER, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE, WILL ARRIVE TOMMORROW (FRIDAY). HE WILL BE MET AT KAI TAK AIRPORT BY THE PRESIDENT OF HONG KONG BRANCH OF THE INSTITUTION, MR. H.T.J. HUTCHINS, WHO IS THE PRESENTLY THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER OF THE NEW TERRITORIES.

ON MONDAY, MR. WHITAKER WILL CALL ON THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES, MR. HARRY WOOD, AND IN THE EVENING ATTEND THE HONG KONG BRANCH'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. FOUNDED IN 1959, THE BRANCH NOW HAS MORE THAN 220 MEMBERS.

BEFORE LEAVING ON APRIL 18, MR. WHITAKER WILL SPEND SOME TIME VISITING THE FIRE SERVICE DEPARTMENT'S ESTABLISHMENTS.

MR. WHITAKER WHO IS THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, EAST SUSSEX FIRE BRIGADE, WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE INSTITUTION LAST SEPTEMBER. HE HOLDS THE POST FOR A YEAR. HE HAS SPENT THE PAST FEW DAYS IN SINGAPORE DURING WHICH HE ATTENDED THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF A LOCAL BRANCH. FOLLOWING HIS VISIT TO HONG KONG HE WILL GO TO BANGKOK BEFORE RETURNING TO BRITAIN.

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SWD PROBATION OFFICER RETIRES

THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR. THOMAS LEE, REPRESENTING STAFF OF HIS DEPARTMENT, TODAY PRESENTED A GOLD WATCH TO A SENIOR PROBATION OFFICER, MR. CHEN HUNG, WHO IS RETIRING AFTER 20 YEARS' SERVICE.

THE PRESENTATION WAS HELD AT THE DEPARTMENT'S HEADQUARTERS IN LEE GARDENS.

IN MAKING THE PRESENTATION, MR. LEE RECALLED MR. CHEN'S ASSOCIATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO HIS LOYALTY AND DEVOTION TO SERVICE FOR THE CARE AND REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS WHICH, HE SAID, HAD BEEN OF MUCH VALUE.

EDUCATED AT ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY IN SHANGHAI, MR. CHEN WAS, FOR MOST OF HIS CAREER, ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROBATION SERVICE SERVING IN VARIOUS LOCAL COURTS OF LAW, INCLUDING THE DISTRICT COURTS AND THE SUPREME COURT.

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THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 1975

- 6 -

DANGEROUS BUILDINGS
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THE BUILDING AUTHORITY TODAY DECLARED NOS. 288 AND 290 QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL, HONG KONG, TO BE IN A DANGEROUS CONDITION.

THE PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING SURVEYOR SAID THIS MORNING THAT BOTH THESE FOUR-STORY PRE-WAR BUILDINGS HAD BEEN UNDER OBSERVATION FOR SOME TIME IN VIEW OF THE STEADILY DETERIORATING CONDITION OF THEIR BRICKWORK, MAINLY AT THE REAR, AND OF THE STRUCTURAL TIMBERWORK IN GENERAL.

✦THERE ARE INDICATIONS OF CRUSHING TO THE ALREADY SEVERELY FRACTURED AND OPEN JOINTED ARCHED CROSS WALL SEPARATING THE KITCHEN AREA AT GROUND STOREY LEVEL IN NO. 288 AS WELL AS OTHER SIGNS OF WEAKNESS AND SOME MOVEMENT ELSEWHERE TO THIS MAIN CROSS WALL AND THE REAR MAIN WALLS OF BOTH BUILDINGS,✦ HE SAID.

✦IN ADDITION, THE SUBSTANTIALLY DECAYED CONDITION OF SOME OF THE MAIN ROOF AND 1ST FLOOR TIMBERS IN NO. 290 IN PARTICULAR, GAVE RISE TO FEARS THAT LOCAL OR PARTIAL COLLAPSES COULD OCCUR HERE AS WELL.✦

NOTICES OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR CLOSURE ORDERS IN VICTORIA DISTRICT COURT AT 9.30 AM ON MAY 8, 1975 WERE POSTED TODAY.

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